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LETTER DATED 5 JUNE 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ESTONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to Your Excellency's attention the most recent developments concerning the Russian-Estonian negotiations.

Good progress has been made in most areas under discussion except for the issue that threatens our sovereignty - the stationing of Russian Military Forces on Estonian soil.

I would therefore be grateful if you could arrange for the enclosed statement to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst JAAKSON
Ambassador

Annex

Statement made on 4 June 1992 concerning the stalled negotiations between Estonia and Russia on the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Estonia

The course of Estonian-Russian negotiations has clearly shown that no substantial progress has been made on the most fundamental question - the withdrawal of the armed forces of the Russian Federation located in Estonia. The armed forces of the former Soviet Union, which have been declared to be Russian troops, are located in Estonia with no justification, against the will of the Estonian people and in violation of international law. Ignoring a Republic of Estonia Supreme Council resolution of 23 January 1992, 1/ Russian military personnel continue to execute illegal transactions with Estonian property, harm the environment and destabilize the economic and socio-political situation in the country.

The Russian delegation has stated its position, whereby the withdrawal of their forces from Estonia cannot begin before 1994 and will not be complete prior to 1997. According to the Russian delegation, the withdrawal of some military units may not occur until the year 2002. These dates are unacceptable to the Republic of Estonia. Estonia is prepared to compromise, if it believes that Russia is ready to assume realistic positions on the issues at hand. In the third round of negotiations, however, the Russian side expressed its desire that Estonia either cover the expenses for the withdrawal and relocation of Russian military forces or agree to their long-term stay on Estonian territory. Recent tendencies in Russia to regard other States as either "nearby" or "far away" foreign countries disregard the principle of the sovereign equality of States, and in essence represent "spheres of influence" policies, with all their resulting implications.

The course of events up until now forces us to assume that the course of negotiations on the Russian side is being dictated by higher military authorities. Estonia has been accused of provoking the Russian military. These accusations are unfounded and are to be unequivocally refuted by the Estonian delegation. The Republic of Estonia, as an independent State, has the right and the obligation to exercise control and supreme sovereign power on its territory. The exercise of these rights in many areas of Estonia, including for example in the town of Paldiski and the Pakri peninsula, but also on Estonian borders, in Estonian airspace and territorial waters, has been rendered impossible by the actions of the Russian military.

The Russian side has not released information on the number and location of its forces in Estonia. Instead, they continue to demand conditions which are clearly unacceptable to Estonia, in order to perpetuate the Russian military presence in this country.

1/ This resolution claimed jurisdiction over property under the control of the former Soviet forces.

It is our duty to inform the world community that the Estonian delegation does not consider it possible to reach an agreement on the matter of the withdrawal of the military under these conditions, and that we consider it prudent that the negotiations on this particular issue be temporarily discontinued. Considering the fact that the continued presence of Russian troops on Estonian territory also poses a real threat to European security, we appeal to Russian political leaders and to other States, international organizations and the world community to use their full influence to promote the rapid withdrawal of foreign military forces from Estonia.

The deadlock in negotiations is also caused by Russia's refusal to treat Estonia as a State illegally and forcefully incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940. At the same time, we do not blame the current Russian Government for the past Stalinist crimes against our country. However, we will not allow for historical truth to be distorted, as this would provide grounds to dispute the legal basis of Estonian-Russian relations.

The Republic of Estonia is sincerely interested in achieving good neighbourly relations with the Russian Federation. These relations must be based on a mutual respect for sovereignty and equality and must comply with the principles of international law. An immediate end to foreign military activity and rapid withdrawal of these forces from Estonia is a mandatory precondition to this end.